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# MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Confederate States:*

At the date of your last adjournment the preparations of the enemy for further hostilities had assumed so menacing an aspect as to excite in some minds apprehension of our ability to meet them with sufficient promptness to avoid serious reverses. These preparations were completed shortly after your departure from the seat of government, and the armies of the United States made simultaneous advance on our frontiers, on the western rivers and on the Atlantic coast in masses so great as to evince their hope of overbearing all resistance by mere weight of numbers. This hope, however, like those previously entertained by our foes, has vanished. In Virginia, their fourth attempt at invasion by armies whose assured success was confidently predicted, has met with decisive repulse. Our noble defenders, under the consummate leadership of their general, have again, at Fredericksburg, inflicted on the forces under General Burnside the like disastrous overthrow as had been previously suffered by the successive invading armies commanded by Generals McDowell, McClellan and Pope.

In the West obstinate battles have been fought with varying fortunes, marked by frightful carnage on both sides, but the enemy's hopes of decisive results have again been baffled, while at Vicksburg another formidable expedition has been repulsed with inconsiderable loss on our side and severe damage to the assailing forces. On the Atlantic coast the enemy has been unable to gain a footing beyond the protecting shelter of his fleets, and the city of Galveston has just been recovered by our forces, which succeeded not only in the capture of the garrison but of one of the enemy's vessels of war, which was carried by boarding parties from merchant river steamers. Our fortified positions have every where been much strengthened and improved, affording assurance of our ability to meet, with success, the utmost efforts of our enemies, in spite of the magnitude of their preparations for attack.

A review of our history during the two years of our national existence affords ample cause for congratulation and demands the most fervent expression of our thankfulness to the Almighty Father who has blessed our cause. We are justified in asserting, with a pride, surely not unbecoming, that these Confederate States have added another to the lessons taught by history for the instruction of man: that they have afforded another example of the impossibility of subjugating a people determined to be free; and have demonstrated that no superiority of numbers or available resources can overcome the resistance offered by such valor in combat, such constancy under suffering and such cheerful endurance of privation as have been conspicuously displayed by this people in the defence of their rights and liberties. The anticipations with which we entered into the contest have

now ripened into a conviction which is not only shared with us by the common opinion of neutral nations, but is evidently forcing itself upon our enemies themselves. If we but mark the history of the present year by resolute perseverance in the path we have hitherto pursued; by vigorous effort in the development of all our resources for defence; and by the continued exhibition of the same unfaltering courage in our soldiers and able conduct in their leaders as have distinguished the past, we have every reason to expect that this will be the closing year of the war. The war, which in its inception, was waged for forcing us back into the Union, having failed to accomplish that purpose, passed into a second stage in which it was attempted to conquer and rule these States as dependent provinces. Defeated in this second design, our enemies have evidently entered upon another, which can have no other purpose than revenge and thirst for blood and plunder of private property. But however implacable they may be, they can have neither the spirit nor the resources required for a fourth year of a struggle uncheered by any hope of success, kept alive solely for the indulgence of mercenary and wicked passions, and demanding so exhaustive an expenditure of blood and money as has hitherto been imposed on their people. The advent of peace will be hailed with joy. Our desire for it has never been concealed. Our efforts to avoid the war forced on us as it was, by the lust of conquest and the insane passions of our foes, are known to mankind. But earnest as has been our wish for peace and great as have been our sacrifices and sufferings during the war, the determination of this people has with each succeeding month become more unalterably fixed, to endure any sufferings and continue any sacrifices, however prolonged, until their right to self-government and the sovereignty and independence of these States shall have been triumphantly vindicated and firmly established.

In this connection, the occasion seems not unsuitable for some reference to the relations between the Confederacy and the neutral powers of Europe since the separation of these States from the former Union. Four of the States now members of the Confederacy were recognised by name as independent sovereignties in a treaty of peace, concluded in the year 1783, with one of the two great maritime powers of Western Europe, and had been, prior to that period, allies in war of the other. In the year 1778 they formed a Union with nine other States under articles of Confederation. Dissatisfied with that Union, three of them, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, together with eight of the States now members of the United States, seceded from it in 1789, and these eleven seceding States formed a second union, although by the terms of the Articles of Confederation express provision was made that the first union should be perpetual. Their right to secede, notwithstanding this provision, was neither contested by the States from which they separated, nor made the subject of discussion with any third power. When, at a later period, North Carolina acceded to that second union, and when, still later, the other seven States, now members of this Confederacy, became also members of the same Union, it was upon the recognized footing of equal and independent sovereignties, nor had it then entered into

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the minds of men that sovereign States could be compelled, by force, to remain members of a confederation into which they had entered of their own free will, if, at a subsequent period, the defense of their safety and honor should, in their judgment, justify withdrawal. The experience of the past had evinced the futility of any renunciation of such inherent rights, and accordingly the provision for perpetuity contained in the Articles of Confederation of 1778 was omitted in the Constitution of 1789. When, therefore, in 1861 eleven of the States again thought proper, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, to secede from the second union, and to form a third one under an amended constitution, they exercised a right which, being inherent, required no justification to foreign nations, and which international law did not permit them to question. The usages of intercourse between nations do, however, require that official communication be made to friendly powers of all organic changes in the constitution of States, and there was obvious propriety in giving prompt assurance of our desire to continue amicable relations with all mankind. It was under the influence of these considerations that your predecessors, the provisional government, took early measures for sending to Europe Commissioners charged with the duty of visiting the capitals of the different powers, and making arrangements for the opening of more formal diplomatic intercourse.

Prior, however, to the arrival abroad of those Commissioners, the United States had commenced hostilities against the Confederacy by despatching a secret expedition for the reinforcement of Fort Sumter, after an express promise to the contrary, and with a duplicity which has been fully unveiled in a former message. They had also addressed communications to the different Cabinets of Europe, in which they assumed the attitude of being sovereign over this Confederacy, alleging that these independent States were in rebellion against the remaining States of the Union, and threatening Europe with manifestations of their displeasure if it should treat the Confederate States as having an independent existence. It soon became known that these pretensions were not considered abroad to be as absurd as they were known to be at home, nor had Europe yet learned what reliance was to be placed on the official statements of the Cabinet at Washington. The delegation of power granted by these States to the Federal Government to represent them in foreign intercourse had led Europe into the grave error of supposing that their separate sovereignty and independence had been merged into one common sovereignty, and had ceased to have a distinct existence. Under the influence of this error, which all appeals to reason and historical fact were vainly used to dispel, our Commissioners were met by the declaration that foreign governments could not assume to judge between the conflicting representations of the two parties as to the true nature of their previous mutual relations. The governments of Great Britain and France accordingly signified their determination to confine themselves to recognizing the self-evident fact of the existence of a war, and to maintaining a strict neutrality during its progress. Some of the other powers of Europe pursued the same course of policy, and it became apparent that by

some understanding, express or tacit, Europe had decided to leave the initiative in all action touching the contest on this continent to the two powers just named, who were recognized to have the largest interests involved, both by reason of proximity and of the extent and intimacy of their commercial relations with the States engaged in war.

It is manifest that the course of action adopted by Europe, while based on an apparent refusal to determine the question, or to side with either party, was in point of fact an actual decision against our rights and in favor of the groundless pretensions of the United States. It was a refusal to treat us as an independent government. If we were independent States, the refusal to entertain with us the same international intercourse as was maintained with our enemy was unjust, and was injurious in its effects, whatever may have been the motive which prompted it. Neither was it in accordance with the high moral obligations of that international code whose chief sanction is the conscience of sovereigns and the public opinion of mankind, that those eminent powers should decline the performance of a duty peculiarly incumbent on them, from any apprehension of the consequences to themselves. One immediate and necessary result of their declining the responsibility of a decision which must have been adverse to the extravagant pretensions of the United States, was the prolongation of hostilities to which our enemies were thereby encouraged and which have resulted in nothing but scenes of carnage and devastation on this continent, and of misery and suffering on the other, such as have scarcely a parallel in history. Had those powers promptly admitted our right to be treated as all other independent nations, none can doubt that the moral effect of such action would have been to dispel the delusion under which the United States have persisted in their efforts to accomplish our subjugation. To the continued hesitation of the same powers in rendering this act of simple justice towards this Confederacy is still due the continuance of the calamities which mankind suffers from the interruption of its peaceful pursuits, both in the old and the new worlds.

There are other matters in which less than justice has been rendered to this people by neutral Europe, and undue advantage conferred on the aggressors in a wicked war. At the inception of hostilities the inhabitants of the Confederacy were almost exclusively agriculturists; those of the United States, to a great extent, mechanics and merchants. We had no commercial marine, while their merchant vessels covered the ocean. We were without a navy, while they had powerful fleets. The advantage which they posessed for inflicting injury on our coasts and harbors was thus counterbalanced in some measure by the exposure of their commerce to attack by private armed vessels. It was known to Europe that within a very few years past the United States had peremptorily refused to accede to proposals for abolishing privateering, on the ground, as alleged by them, that nations owning powerful fleets would thereby obtain undue advantage over those possessing inferior naval forces. Yet no sooner was war flagrant between the Confederacy and the United States, than the maritime powers of Europe

issued orders prohibiting either party from bringing prizes into their ports. This prohibition directed with apparent impartiality against both beligerents, was in reality effective against the Confederate States alone, for they alone could find a hostile commerce on the ocean. Merely nominal against the United States, the prohibition operated with intense severity on the Confederacy, by depriving it of the only means of maintaining, with some approach to equality, its struggle on the ocean against the crushing superiority of naval force possessed by its enemies. The value and efficiency of the weapon which was thus wrested from our grasp by the combined action of neutral European powers in favor of a nation which professes openly its intention of ravaging their commerce by privateers in any future war, is strikingly illustrated by the terror inspired among the commercial classes of the United States by a single cruiser of the Confederacy. One national steamer commanded by officers and manned by a crew who are debarred, by the closure of neutral ports, from the opportunity of causing captured vessels to be condemned in their favor as prize, has sufficed to double the rates of marine insurance in Northern ports and consign to forced inaction numbers of Northern vessels, in addition to the direct damage inflicted by captures at sea How difficult, then, to overestimate the effects that must have been produced by the hundreds of private armed vessels that would have swept the seas in pursuit of the commerce of our enemy, if the means of disposing of their prizes had not been withheld by the action of neutral Europe!

But it is especially in relation to the so-called blockade of our coast that the policy of European powers has been so shaped as to cause the greatest injury to the Confederacy, and to confer signal advantages on the United States. The importance of this subject requires some development.

Prior to the year 1856, the principles regulating this subject were to be gathered from the writings of eminent publicists, the decisions of admiralty courts, international treaties, and the usages of nations. The uncertainty and doubt which prevailed in reference to the true rules of maritime law, in time of war, resulting from the discordant and often conflicting principles announced from such varied and independent sources, had become a grievous evil to mankind. Whether a blockade was allowable against a port not invested by land as well as by sea; whether a blockade was valid by sea if the investing fleet was merely sufficient to render ingress to the blockaded port "evidently dangerous," or whether it was further required for its legality that it should be sufficient "really to prevent access;" and numerous other similar questions had remained doubtful and undecided.

Animated by the highly honorable desire to put an end "to differences of opinion between neutrals and belligerents, which may occasion serious difficulties and even conflicts," (I quote the official language,) the five great powers of Europe, together with Sardinia and Turkey, adopted, in 1856, the following "solemn declaration" of principles:

1. Privateering is, and remains abolished.

2. The neutral flag covers enemy's goods, with the exception of contraband of war.

3. Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under enemy's flag.

4. Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective; that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy.

Not only did this solemn declaration announce to the world the principles to which the signing powers agreed to conform in future wars, but it contained a clause to which those powers gave immediate effect, and which provided that the States, not parties to the Congress of Paris, should be invited to accede to the declaration. Under this invitation every independent State in Europe yielded its assent; at least, no instance is known to me of a refusal; and the United States, while declining to assent to the proposition which prohibited privateering, declared that the three remaining principles were in entire accordance with their own views of international law.

No instance is known in history of the adoption of rules of public law under circumstances of like solemnity, with like unanimity, and pledging the faith of nations with a sanctity so peculiar.

When, therefore, this Confederacy was formed, and when neutral powers while deferring action on its demand for admission into the family of nations, recognized it as a belligerent power, Great Britain and France made informal proposals about the same time that their own rights as neutrals should be guarantied by our acceding, as belligerents, to the declaration of principles made by the Congress of Paris. The request was addressed to our sense of justice, and therefore met immediate favorable response in the resolutions of the Provisional Congress of the 13th August, 1861, by which all the principles announced by the Congress of Paris were adopted as the guide of our conduct during the war, with the sole exception of that relative to privateering. As the right to make use of privateers was one in which neutral nations had, as to the present war, no interest; as it was a right which the United States had refused to abandon and which they remained at liberty to employ against us; as it was a right of which we were already in actual enjoyment, and which we could not be expected to renounce *flagrante bello* against an adversary possessing an overwhelming superiority of naval forces, it was reserved with entire confidence that neutral nations could not fail to perceive that just reason existed for the reservation. Nor was this confidence misplaced, for the official documents published by the British Government, usually called "Blue Books," contain the expression of the satisfaction of that government with the conduct of the officials who conducted successfully the delicate business confided to their charge.

These solemn declarations of principle, this implied agreement between the Confederacy and the two powers just named, have been suffered to remain inoperative against the menaces and outrages on neutral rights, committed by the United States with unceasing and progressing arrogance during the whole period of the war. Neutral Europe remained passive when the United States, with a naval force insufficient to blockade, effectively, the coast of a single State, proclaimed a paper blockade of thousands of miles of coast, extending

from the capes of the Chesapeake to those of Florida, and encircling the Gulf of Mexico from Key West to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Compared with this monstrous pretension of the United States, the blockades known in history, under the names of the Berlin and Milan decrees, and the British orders in Council, in the years 1806 and 1807 sink into insignificance! Yet those blockades were justified by the powers that declared them, on the sole ground that they were retaliatory; yet those blockades have since been condemned by the publicists of those very powers as violations of international law; yet those blockades evoked angry remonstrances from neutral powers amongst which the United States were the most conspicuous; yet those blockades became the chief cause of the war between Great Britain and the United States in 1812; yet those blockades were one of the principal motives that led to the declaration of the Congress of Paris in 1856, in the fond hope of imposing an enduring check on the very abuse of maritime power, which is now renewed by the United States in 1861 and 1862, under circumstances and with features of aggravated wrong without precedent in history.

The records of our State Department contain the evidence of the repeated and formal remonstrances made by this government to neutral powers against the recognition of this blockade. It has been shown by evidence not capable of contradiction, and which has been furnished in part by the officials of neutral nations, that the few ports of this Confederacy, before which any naval forces at all have been stationed, have been invested so inefficiently that hundreds of entries have been effected into them since the declaration of the blockade: that our enemies have themselves admitted the inefficiency of their blockade in the most forcible manner, by repeated official complaints of the sale, to us, of goods contraband of war, a sale which could not possibly affect their interests if their pretended blockade was sufficient "really to prevent access to our coast;" that they have gone farther, and have alleged their inability to render their paper blockade effective as the excuse for the odious barbarity of destroying the entrance to one of our harbors by sinking vessels loaded with stone in the channel; that our commerce with foreign nations has been intercepted, not by the effective investment of our ports, nor by the seizure of ships in the attempt to enter them, but by the capture on the high seas of neutral vessels by the cruisers of our enemies whenever supposed to be bound to any point on our extensive coast, without enquiry whether a single blockading vessel was to be found at such point; that blockading vessels have left the ports at which they were stationed for distant expeditions, have been absent for many days and have returned, without notice either of the cessation or renewal of the blockade; in a word, that every prescription of maritime law, and every right of neutral nations to trade with a belligerent under the sanction of principles heretofore universally respected, have been systematically and persistently violated by the United States. Neutral Europe has received our remonstrances and has submitted in almost unbroken silence to all the wrongs that the United States have chosen to inflict on its commerce. The Cabinet of Great Britain, however, has not

confined itself to such implied acquiescence in these breaches of international law as results from simple inaction, but has in a published despatch of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, assumed to make a change in the principle enunciated by the Congress of Paris, to which the faith of the British Government was considered to be pledged; a change too important and too prejudicial to the interests of the Confederacy to be overlooked, and against which I have directed solemn protest to be made, after a vain attempt to obtain satisfactory explanations from the British Government. In a published despatch from her Majesty's Foreign Office, to her Minister at Washington, under date of the 11th February, 1862, occurs the following passage:

"Her Majesty's Government, however, are of opinion that assuming that the blockade was duly notified and also that a number of ships is stationed and remains at the entrance of a port sufficient really to prevent access to it; *or to create an evident danger of entering it or leaving it*, and that these ships do not voluntarily permit ingress or egress, the fact that various ships may have successfully escaped through it (as in the particular instance here referred to) will not of itself prevent the blockade from being an effectual one by international law."

The words which I have italicised are an addition made by the British Government of its own authority to a principle the exact terms of which were settled with deliberation by the common consent of civilized nations, and by implied convention with this Government, as already explained, and their effect is clearly to re-open to the prejudice of the Confederacy one of the very disputed questions on the law of blockade which the Congress of Paris professed to settle. The importance of this change is readily illustrated by taking one of our ports as an example. There is "evident danger" in entering the port of Wilmington from the presence of a blockading force, and by this test the blockade is effective. "Access is not really prevented" by the blockading fleet to the same port, for steamers are continually arriving and departing, so that tried by this test the blockade is ineffective and invalid. The justice of our complaint on this point is so manifest as to leave little room for doubt that further reflection will induce the British Government to give us such assurances as will efface the painful impressions that would result from its language, if left unexplained.

From the foregoing remarks you will perceive that during nearly two years of struggle in which every energy of our country has been evoked for maintaining its very existence, the neutral nations of Europe have pursued a policy which nominally impartial has been practically most favorable to our enemies and most detrimental to us.

The exercise of the neutral right of refusing entry into their ports to prizes taken by both belligerents, was eminently hurtful to the Confederacy. It was sternly asserted and maintained.

The exercise of the neutral right of commerce with a belligerent whose ports are not blockaded by fleets sufficient really to prevent access to them, would have been eminently hurtful to the United States. It was complaisantly abandoned.

The duty of neutral States to receive with cordiality and recognize

with respect any new confederation that independent States may think proper to form was too clear to admit of denial, but its postponement was eminently beneficial to the United States and detrimental to the Confederacy. It was postponed.

In this review of our relations with the neutral nations of Europe, it has been my purpose to point out distinctly that this Government has no complaint to make that those nations declared their neutrality. It could neither expect nor desire more. The complaint is that the neutrality has been rather nominal than real, and that recognized neutral rights have been alternately asserted and waived in such manner as to bear with great severity on us, and to confer signal advantages on our enemy.

I have hitherto refrained from calling to your attention this condition of our relations with foreign powers for various reasons. The chief of these was the fear that a statement of our just grounds of complaint against a course of policy so injurious to our interests might be misconstrued into an appeal for aid. Unequal as we were in mere numbers and available resources to our enemies, we were conscious of powers of resistance, in relation to which Europe was incredulous, and our remonstrances were therefore peculiarly liable to be misunderstood. Proudly self-reliant, the Confederacy knowing full well the character of the contest into which it was forced, with full trust in the superior qualities of its population, the superior valor of its soldiers, the superior skill of its Generals, and above all in the justice of its cause, felt no need to appeal for the maintenance of its rights to other earthly aids, and it began and has continued this struggle with the calm confidence ever inspired in those who with consciousness of right can invoke the Divine blessing on their cause. This confidence has been so assured that we have never yielded to despondency under defeat, nor do we feel undue elation at the present brighter prospect of successful issue to our contest. It is therefore, because our just grounds of complaint can no longer be misinterpreted that I lay them clearly before you. It seems to me now proper to give you the information and although no immediate results may be attained, it is well that truth should be preserved and recorded. It is well that those who are to follow us should understand the full nature and character of the tremendous conflict in which the blood of our people has been poured out like water, and in which they have resisted unaided the shock of hosts which would have sufficed to overthrow many of the powers which by their hesitation in according our rights as an independent nation imply doubt of our ability to maintain our national existence. It may be too, that if in future times, unfriendly discussions not now anticipated shall unfortunately arise between this Confederacy and some European power, the recollection of our forbearance under the grievances which I have enumerated, may be evoked with happy influence in preventing any serious disturbance of peaceful relations.

It would not be proper to close my remarks on the subject of our foreign relations without adverting to the fact that the correspondence between the Cabinets of France, Great Britain and Russia recently

published, indicates a gratifying advance in the appreciation by those governments of the true interests of mankind as involved in the war on this continent. It is to the enlightened ruler of the French nation that the public feeling of Europe is indebted for the first official exhibition of its sympathy for the sufferings endured by this people with so much heroism, of its horror at the awful carnage with which the progress of the war has been marked and of its desire for a speedy peace. The clear and direct intimation contained in the language of the French note, that our ability to maintain our independence has been fully established was not controverted by the answer of either of the Cabinets to which it was addressed. It is indeed difficult to conceive a just ground for a longer delay on this subject after reading the following statement of facts contained in the letter emanating from the minister of his Imperial Majesty: "There has been established, from the very beginning of this war, an equilibrium of forces between the belligerents, which has since been almost constantly maintained, and, after the spilling of so much blood, they are to-day, in this respect, in a situation which has not sensibly changed. Nothing authorises the prevision that more decisive military operations will shortly occur. According to the last advices received in Europe, the two armies were, on the contrary, in a condition which permitted neither to hope within a short delay advantages sufficiently marked to turn the balance definitively, and to accelerate the conclusion of peace." As this government has never professed the intention of conquering the United States, but has simply asserted its ability to defend itself against being conquered by that power, we may safely conclude that the claims of this Confederacy to its just place in the family of nations cannot long be withheld, after so frank and formal an admission of its capacity to cope, on equal terms, with its aggressive foes, and to maintain itself against their attempts to obtain decisive results by arms.

It is my painful duty again to inform you of the renewed examples of every conceivable atrocity committed by the armed forces of the United States, at different points within the Confederacy, and which must stamp indelible infamy not only on the perpetrators, but on their superiors, who, having the power to check these outrages on humanity, numerous and well authenticated as they have been, have not yet, in a single instance of which I am aware, inflicted punishment on the wrong-doers. Since my last communication to you, one General McNeil murdered seven prisoners of war in cold blood, and the demand for his punishment has remained unsatisfied. The government of the United States, after promising examination and explanation in relation to the charges made against General Benjamin F. Butler, has, by its subsequent silence, after repeated efforts on my part to obtain some answer on the subject, not only admitted his guilt, but sanctioned it by acquiescence, and I have accordingly branded this criminal as an outlaw and directed his execution in expiation of his crimes if he should fall into the hands of any of our forces. Recently I have received apparently authentic intelligence of another general by the name of Milroy, who has issued orders in Western Virginia for the payment of money to him by the inhabitants, accompanied by the

most savage threats of shooting every recusant, besides burning his house; and threatening similar atrocities against any of our citizens who shall fail to betray their country by giving him prompt notice of the approach of any of our forces, and this subject has also been submitted to the superior military authorities of the United States, with but faint hope that they will evince any disapprobation of the act. Humanity shudders at the appalling atrocities which are being daily multiplied under the sanction of those who have obtained temporary possession of power in the United States and who are fast making its once fair name a by-word of reproach among civilized men. Not even the natural indignation inspired by this conduct should make us, however so unjust, as to attribute to the whole mass of the people who are subjected to the despotism that now reigns with unbridled license in the city of Washington, a willing acquiescence in its conduct of the war. There must necessarily exist among our enemies, very many, perhaps a majority, whose humanity recoils from all participation in such atrocities, but who cannot be held wholly guiltless while permitting their continuance without an effort at repression.

The public journals of the North have been received, containing a proclamation dated on the first day of the present month, signed by the President of the United States, in which he orders and declares all slaves within ten of the States of the Confederacy to be free, except such as are found within certain districts now occupied in part by the armed forces of the enemy.

We may well leave it to the instincts of that common humanity which a beneficent Creator has implanted in the breasts of our fellowmen of all countries, to pass judgment on a measure by which several millions of human beings of an inferior race, peaceful and contented laborers in their sphere, are doomed to extermination, while at the same time they are encouraged to a general assassination of their masters by the insidious recommendation "to abstain from violence unless in necessary self defence." Our own detestation of those who have attempted the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man, is tempered by profound contempt for the impotent rage which it discloses. So far as regards the action of this government on such criminals as may attempt its execution, I confine myself to informing you that I shall, unless in your wisdom you deem some other course more expedient, deliver to the several State authorities all commissioned officers of the United States that may hereafter be captured by our forces in any of the States embraced in the proclamation, that they may be dealt with in accordance with the laws of those States providing for the punishment of criminals engaged in exciting servile insurrection. The enlisted soldiers I shall continue to treat as unwilling instruments in the commission of these crimes and shall direct their discharge and return to their homes on the proper and usual parole.

In its political aspect, this measure possesses great significance, and to it in this light, I invite your attention. It affords to our whole people the complete and crowning proof of the true nature of the designs of the party which elevated to power the present occupant of the Presi-

dential chair at Washington, and which sought to conceal its purposes by every variety of artful device, and by the perfidious use of the most solemn and repeated pledges on every possible occasion. I extract, in this connection, as a single example, the following declaration made by President Lincoln, under the solemnity of his oath as Chief Magistrate of the United States, on the 4th March, 1861:

"Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehensions. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so; and I have no inclination to do so. Those who nominated and elected me, did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

"'*Resolved*, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of powers on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend: and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest crimes.'"

Nor was this declaration of the want of power or disposition to interfere with our social system confined to a state of peace. Both before and after the actual commencement of hostilities, the President of the United States repeated in formal official communication to the Cabinets of Great Britain and France, that he was utterly without constitutional power to do the act which he has just committed, and that in no possible event, whether the secession of these States resulted in the establishment of a separate Confederacy or in the restoration of the Union, was there any authority by virtue of which he could either restore a disaffected State to the Union by force of arms or make any change in any of its institutions. I refer especially for verification of this assertion, to the despatches addressed by the Secretary of State of the United States under direction of the President, to the Ministers of the United States at London and Paris, under date of 10th and 22d April, 1861.

The people of this Confederacy then cannot fail to receive this proclamation as the fullest vindication of their own sagacity in foreseeing the uses to which the dominant party in the United States intended from the beginning to apply their power, nor can they cease to remember, with devout thankfulness, that it is to their own vigilance in resisting the first stealthy progress of approaching despotism, that

they owe their escape from consequences now apparent to the most sceptical. This proclamation will have another salutary effect in calming the fears of those who have constantly evinced the apprehension that this war might end by some reconstruction of the old Union or some renewal of close political relations with the United States. These fears have never been shared by me, nor have I ever been able to perceive on what basis they could rest. But the proclamation affords the fullest guarantee of the impossibility of such a result: it has established a state of things which can lead to but one of three possible consequences; the extermination of the slaves, the exile of the whole white population from the Confederacy, or absolute and total separation of these States from the United States.

This proclamation is also an authentic statement by the government of the United States of its inability to subjugate the South by force of arms, and as such must be accepted by neutral nations, which can no longer find any justification in withholding our just claims to formal recognition. It is also in effect an intimation to the people of the North that they must prepare to submit to a separation now become inevitable, for that people are too acute not to understand that a restoration of the Union has been rendered forever impossible by the adoption of a measure which, from its very nature, neither admits of retraction nor can co-exist with union.

Among the subjects to which your attention will be specially devoted during the present session, you will no doubt deem the adoption of some comprehensive system of finance as being of paramount importance. The increasing public debt, the great augmentation in the volume of the currency with its necessary concomitant of extravagant prices for all articles of consumption, the want of revenue from a taxation adequate to support the public credit, all unite in admonishing us that energetic and wise legislation alone can prevent serious embarrassment in our monetary affairs. It is my conviction that the people of the Confederacy will freely meet taxation on a scale adequate to the maintenance of the public credit and the support of their government. When each family is sending forth its most precious ones to meet exposure in camp and death in battle, what ground can there be to doubt the disposition to devote a tithe of its income and more, if more be necessary, to provide the government with means for ensuring the comfort of its defenders? If our enemies submit to an excise on every commodity they produce and to the daily presence of the tax-gatherer, with no higher motive than the hope of success in their wicked designs against us, the suggestion of an unwillingness on the part of this people to submit to the taxation necessary for the success of their defense is an imputation on their patriotism that few will be disposed to make, and that none can justify.

The legislation of your last session intended to hasten the funding of outstanding Treasury notes has proved beneficial as shown by the returns annexed to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury. But it was neither sufficiently prompt nor far-reaching to meet the full extent of the evil. The passage of some enactment, carrying still further the policy of that law by fixing a limitation not later than the

1st July next to the delay allowed for funding the notes issued prior to the 1st December, 1862, will, in the opinion of the Secretary, have the effect to withdraw from circulation nearly the entire sum issued previous to the last named date. If to this be added a revenue from adequate taxation, and a negotiation of bonds guarantied proportionately by the several States as has already been generously proposed by some of them in enactments spontaneously adopted, there is little doubt that we shall see our finances restored to a sound and satisfactory condition; our circulation relieved of the redundancy now productive of so many mischiefs; and our credit placed on such a basis as to relieve us from further anxiety relative to our resources for the prosecution of the war.

It is true that at its close our debt will be large; but it will be due to our own people, and neither the interest nor the capital will be exported to distant countries, impoverishing ours for their benefit. On the return of peace the untold wealth which will spring from our soil will render the burthen of taxation far less onerous than is now supposed, especially if we take into consideration that we shall then be free from the large and steady drain of our substance to which we were subjected in the late Union through the instrumentality of sectional legislation and protective tariffs.

I recommend to your earnest attention the whole report of the Secretary of the Treasury on this important subject and trust that your legislation on it will be delayed no longer than may be required to enable your wisdom to devise the proper measures for ensuring the accomplishment of the objects proposed.

The operations of the War Department have been in the main satisfactory. In the Report of the Secretary, herewith submitted, will be found a summary of many memorable successes. They are with justice ascribed, in large measure, to the reorganization and reinforcement of our armies under the operation of the enactments for conscription. The wisdom and efficacy of these acts have been approved by results, and the like spirit of unity, endurance and self-devotion in the people, which has hitherto sustained their action, must be relied on to assure their enforcement under the continuing necessities of our situation. The recommendations of the Secretary to this effect are tempered by suggestions for their amelioration, and the subject deserves the consideration of Congress. For the perfection of our military organization no appropriate means should be rejected, and on this subject the opinions of the Secretary merit early attention. It is gratifying to perceive that, under all the efforts and sacrifices of war, the power, means and resources of the Confederacy for its successful prosecution are increasing. Dependence on foreign supplies is to be deplored, and should, as far as practicable, be obviated by the development and employment of internal resources. The peculiar circumstances of the country, however, render this difficult, and require extraordinary encouragements and facilities to be granted by the government. The embarrasments resulting from the limited capacity of the railroads to afford transportation, and the impossibility of otherwise commanding and distributing the necessary supplies for

the armies render the control of the roads under some general supervision, and resort to the power of impressment, military exigencies. While such powers have to be exercised, they should be guarded by judicious provisions against perversion or abuse, and be, as recommended by the Secretary, under due regulation of law.

I specially recommend in this connection some revision of the exemption law of last session. Serious complaints have reached me of the inequality of its operation from eminent and patriotic citizens, whose opinions merit great consideration, and I trust that some means will be devised for leaving at home a sufficient local police without making discriminations, always to be deprecated, between different classes of our citizens.

Our relations with the Indians generally continue to be friendly. A portion of the Cherokee people have assumed an attitude hostile to the Confederate Government; but it is gratifying to be able to state that the mass of intelligence and worth in that nation have remained true and loyal to their treaty engagements. With this exception, there have been no important instances of disaffection among any of the friendly nations and tribes. Dissatisfaction recently manifested itself among certain portions of them; but this resulted from a misapprehension of the intentions of the Government in their behalf. This has been removed and no further difficulty is anticipated.

The Report of the Secretary of the Navy herewith transmitted exhibits the progress made in this branch of the public service since your adjournment, as well as its present condition. The details embraced in it are of such a nature as to render it, in my opinion, incompatible with the public interests that they should be published with this message. I therefore confine myself to inviting your attention to the information therein contained.

The Report of the Postmaster General shows that during the first postal year under our Government, terminating on the 30th of June last, our revenues were in excess of those received by the former Government in its last postal year, while the expenses were greatly decreased. There is still, however, a considerable deficit in the revenues of the Department as compared with its expenses, and although the grants already made from the general Treasury will suffice to cover all liabilities to the close of the fiscal year, ending on the 30th June next, I recommend some legislation, if any can be constitutionally devised, for aiding the revenues of that Department during the ensuing fiscal year, in order to avoid too great a reduction of postal facilities. Your attention is also invited to numerous other improvements in the service recommended in the report, and for which legislation is required.

I recommend to the Congress to devise a proper mode of relief to those of our citizens whose property has been destroyed by order of the Government in pursuance of a policy adopted as a means of national defence. It is true that full indemnity cannot now be made, but some measure of relief is due to those patriotic citizens who have borne private loss for the public good, whose property in effect has been taken for public use, though not directly appropriated.

Our Government, born of the spirit of freedom and of the equality and independence of the States could not have survived a selfish or jealous disposition making each only careful of its own interest or safety. The fate of the Confederacy under the blessing of Divine Providence depends upon the harmony, energy and unity of the States. It especially devolves on you, their representatives, as far as practicable, to reform abuses, to correct errors, to cultivate fraternity and to sustain in the people a just confidence in the Government of their choice. To that confidence and to the unity and self-sacrificing patriotism hitherto displayed is due the success which has marked the unequal contest, and has brought our country into a condition at the present time such as the most sanguine would not have ventured to predict at the commencement of our struggle. Our armies are larger, better disciplined and more thoroughly armed and equipped than at any previous period of the war. The energies of a whole nation, devoted to the single object of success in this war, have accomplished marvels, and many of our trials have, by a beneficent Providence, been converted into blessings. The magnitude of the perils which we encountered have developed the true qualities and illustrated the heroic character of our people, thus gaining for the Confederacy from its birth a just appreciation from the other nations of the earth. The injuries resulting from the interruption of foreign commerce have received compensation by the development of our internal resources. Cannon crown our fortresses that were cast from the products of mines opened and furnaces built during the war. Our mountain caves yield much of the nitre for the manufacture of powder and promise increase of product. From our own foundries and laboratories, from our own armories and workshops we derive, in a great measure, the warlike material, the ordnance and ordnance stores which are expended so profusely in the numerous and desperate engagements that rapidly succeed each other. Cotton and woollen fabrics, shoes and harness, wagons and gun carriages are produced in daily increasing quantities by the factories springing into existence. Our fields, no longer whitened by cotton that cannot be exported, are devoted to the production of cereals and the growth of stock formerly purchased with the proceeds of cotton. In the homes of our noble and devoted women, without whose sublime sacrifices our success would have been impossible, the noise of the loom and of the spinning wheel may be heard throughout the land. With hearts swelling with gratitude let us then join in returning thanks to God and in beseeching the continuance of his protecting care over our cause and the restoration of peace with its manifold blessings to our beloved country..

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Richmond, January 12, 1863.

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